

ADULT AND SENIOR CARE UPDATE

September 2008

This is the third issue of the *Adult and Senior Care Update* of 2008. We hope the *Update* provides you with information you can use. We also hope you will share the *Update* with members of your organization and others interested in adult and senior care issues. Your feedback is encouraged.

REFORMAT OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY (RCFE) REGULATIONS MANUAL

The Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) reformatted RCFE regulations are now posted on our website. The updated regulations can be accessed by clicking on the following link, www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/PG295.htm, and scrolling down to RCFE regulations. This package had no changes in substance, but did make changes in formatting and section numbering while also grouping like topics in a logical order. The intent of these changes was to improve the clarity and organization of the RCFE regulations. The changes were initiated as a result of feedback from provider associations and field staff who use the manual on a day-to-day basis.

If you have any questions, please contact the Technical Assistance and Policy Branch (TAPB) at (916) 324-4312.

FIRST AID TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

TAPB receives questions regarding first aid training requirements for licensed facility staff. Per regulations (Title 22 California Code of Regulations sections 80075(i) and 87411(c)(1)), staff in adult and senior licensed facilities are required to have first aid training “from persons qualified by such agencies as the American Red Cross.”

Online first aid training is permitted. Currently, a hands-on practice component is not required; however, it is recommended that any online training with a skills competency component include a hands-on practice component. The hands-on practice component can increase the confidence level of the participant and consequently augment staff's ability to perform their job duties. The hands-on practice component should be provided and overseen by an on-site instructor and address skills appropriate to the adult and senior residents served.

REMINDER TO OBTAIN INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINATIONS

As in years past, licensees are reminded that all clients and facility staff should be vaccinated against flu each autumn as soon as vaccine becomes available. If possible, these vaccinations should be done by October before flu is present in the community.

The flu season typically occurs between October and April of each year. Sometimes, a client's age or poor health makes it difficult to tell if he/she has contracted flu. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends that, particularly during the peak season, flu be considered in clients or residents of long-term care facilities with any combination of the following:

- Fever greater than or equal to 100.04 degrees Fahrenheit (may be absent or low in elderly residents)
- New onset cough and/or sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Malaise (feeling ill)
- Chills, muscle aches, joint aches, or headache
- Change in respiratory status (increased cough, sputum production, breathing rate)
- Change in mental status or appetite

Because the flu virus can spread rapidly in environments like RCFEs and Adult Residential Facilities where people live in close proximity, be sure to contact your local health department promptly if you suspect an outbreak in your facility. An outbreak is considered the occurrence of even a single case of laboratory-confirmed flu, or more than one client or resident developing an acute respiratory illness with fever during a one-week period. *And, of course, handwashing is considered the single most effective measure known to help prevent or reduce the spread of infection in any facility.*

For more information on flu, contact your local health care providers or health department. You may also wish to consult the American Lung Association's website, which may provide information on flu clinics in your community, at www.flucliniclocator.org/, or call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872).

For CDPH recommendations on the prevention, detection, and control of flu in California's long-term care facilities, please see the CCLD website at www.cclld.ca.gov/PG523.htm. Additionally, the CDPH influenza web page, located at [http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza\(Flu\).aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza(Flu).aspx), provides links to flu-prevention education materials and other information.

Finally, for more information on respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette during the flu and cold season, please see the attached guidelines or go to www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm.

E. COLI INFORMATION

According to CDPH, *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 (*E. coli* O157) is one of hundreds of strains of the bacterium *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*). Although *E. coli* of many types live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals, this particular strain produces a powerful toxin

and can cause severe illness. Symptoms of *E. coli* O157 infection include abdominal cramps and diarrhea, which is sometimes bloody. Most illness has been due to eating undercooked ground beef.

To help prevent *E. coli* O157 infection, CDPH advises the following:

- Cook all ground beef and hamburger thoroughly, until a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the patty reads at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit on a digital thermometer, or the patty is no longer pink inside.
- Drink only pasteurized milk, apple juice, or cider. Commercial juice with an extended shelf life that is sold at room temperature (e.g., juice in cardboard boxes, vacuum-sealed juice in glass containers) has been pasteurized, although that is not generally indicated on the label. Juice concentrates are also heated sufficiently to kill pathogens.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly, especially those that will not be cooked. Raw sprouts can carry *E. coli* O157 and should be avoided, especially by children less than five years of age, immunocompromised persons, and the elderly, all of whom are at risk of serious disease if infection occurs.

Any occurrences of these *E. coli* O157 infections in your facility should be reported to both the licensing agency and the local health department.

For more details about *E. coli* O157, please see the attached fact sheet prepared by CDPH. Please also see the CDPH website at ww2.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/EscherichiacoliO157H7.aspx, as well as the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/ecoli/.

MORE ON FOOD SAFETY

Food borne illnesses tend to increase in hot weather. Often, the cause is due to natural occurrences. Bacteria found in our bodies, the bodies of animals, and in the soil, air, and water, can flourish when combined with the moisture of hot and humid summertime weather. A healthy immune system protects us from harmful bacteria on food and in the environment most of the time and food safety and inspection standards help keep our food safe for consumption.

Regardless, in certain circumstances, bacteria can multiply to harmful levels. When this occurs, food borne illness can result. Of course, senior citizens or those with compromised immune systems can be hit particularly hard by these illnesses, so we offer the following tips for safer food handling and consumption:

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water before handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.
- When eating away from home, find out if there is a source of potable (or safe drinking) water. If not, bring water for food preparation and cleaning.

- Pack clean, wet, disposable washcloths, or moist towelettes and paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces.
- Wash plates, utensils, and cutting boards that held raw meat or poultry after each use. Prevent raw meat juices from coming in contact with ready-to-eat food.
- Be sure to cook meat and poultry completely.
- Perishable food may not be safe to consume if left out for two hours or more. Play it safe and return these foods to the refrigerator after serving.

Finally, keep this in mind: *If in doubt, toss it out!*

...AND, MORE

Caregivers who purchase and prepare foods for residents of licensed facilities can be forgiven if the dates stamped on the packaging cause confusion. In an effort to keep consumers informed of food safety and freshness, several designations have been established in an effort to protect us from expired and potentially harmful food stuffs.

The following information is compiled from the United States Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition and MSNBC.

- **Expiration Date**

This is the most important freshness date used in food packaging. The expiration date is the calendar date on the food item's packaging. Foods purchased or used after the expiration can contain spoilage bacteria or pathogens. The expiration date indicates the last date the food should be consumed or used. If the food item has not been used by this date it should be discarded. The handling of the product after purchase can affect the expiration date. For example, deli meats left on the kitchen counter for an hour will change the expiration date to at least two days earlier than the date on the packaging.

- **"Sell By" or "Pull By" Date**

This is a calendar date on the packaging of a food product that the retailer uses to guide the rotation of shelf stock. It allows time for the product to be stored and used at home. Though products will generally have time left after the "sell by" date has passed, it is best to use them before the date expires. "Sell by" and "pull by" dates are quality-driven and not a food safety concern.

- **"Best If Used By" Date**

The key word in this designation is the word "best." Foods used by this date should have maximum freshness, flavor and texture. "Best if used by" is not a purchase or safety date. After this date, the product begins to deteriorate in flavor or taste, though it is usually still safe to consume.

- **“Use By” Date**

This is the last date a consumer is recommended to use a product while it is at peak quality. This date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a “sell by” or food safety date.

- **“Guaranteed Fresh” Date**

This date is usually used for perishable baked goods. The key word here is “guaranteed.” If you get the product home and it does not taste fresh or it is stale or moldy, take it back to the store.

- **Pack Date**

This date is primarily used on canned and boxed goods. It represents the date the item was packed. The date is usually in encrypted code and can be difficult to decipher. The easiest way to find out what the encryption means is to call the manufacturer’s toll-free number, if available.

ROBERT PATE CHIEF OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND POLICY BRANCH

CCLD is pleased to announce that Robert Pate, Administrator of the Statewide Children’s Residential Program, has been temporarily assigned as Acting Chief of the Technical Assistance and Policy Branch. Robert has worked in CCLD for over 20 years. Thank you, Robert, for agreeing to take on this assignment.

E-MAIL OR SNAIL MAIL

Would you and your colleagues like to receive the *Update* electronically via e-mail or in hard copy? Please let Marisa Lopez of our staff know your preferences by sending her an e-mail at Marisa.Lopez@dss.ca.gov or by calling her at (916) 323-1372.

SUMMARY

If you have questions about this *Update* or suggestions for future topics, please contact Robert Pate, Acting Chief of the Technical Assistance and Policy Branch, at (916) 324-4312. Please visit our website at www.cclld.ca.gov for copies of *Updates*, office locations, provider letters, regulations, or to learn more about licensing services.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Jo Frederick

JO FREDERICK
Deputy Director
Community Care Licensing Division

Enclosures